

# Department of Human Services

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## Trial for former Plymouth child care worker postponed

July 16, 2007

By JACK KRESNAK

FREE PRESS STAFF WRITER

The trial of the former operator of the Childtime Child Care center in Plymouth on a misdemeanor charge of failing to report suspected child abuse was postponed Monday until October.

The trial for 36-year-old Jacqueline Hadwin was scheduled to begin Monday with jury selection, but Hadwin had a death in her family, officials said. Judge Ronald Lowe of the 35th District Court adjourned the trial until Oct. 29.

Hadwin is accused of failing to call Child Protective Services when she learned of bruises and scratches on 2-year-old Allison Newman that others at the day care center suspected were caused by abuse.

As a so-called "mandated reporter" – people like doctors, teachers and other professionals who work with children – Hadwin has a legal duty to call CPS when she suspects child abuse or neglect.

Failure to do so is a misdemeanor punishable by up to 93 days in jail and a \$500 fine, and could prevent someone from ever working with children again.

Allison was later killed in the Canton home of licensed foster parent Carol Poole, who is charged with first-degree felony murder, first-degree child abuse and manslaughter for allegedly injuring the girl on Sept. 22.

A motion on whether Poole's statements to police about how Allison was injured should be admitted as evidence against her is to be heard next Monday by Wayne County Circuit Court Judge Ulysses Boykin. No trial date has been set for Poole, 42, who remains jailed without bond.

Officials from Childtime Child Care, Inc., based in Novi, and Hadwin have denied wrongdoing. The Office of Children and Adult Licensing suspended the center's license to operate last October.

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July 16, 2007

## Trial delayed for daycare operator in foster care death

Iveory Perkins / The Detroit News

**PLYMOUTH** -- A former daycare director charged with failing to report abuse against a 2-year-old won't stand trial until October.

Jury selection was to begin today for the trial of Jacqueline Hadwin, 36, of Westland for a single count of failing to report abuse or neglect against Allison Newman while serving as the director of Childtime Child Care Center in Plymouth.

The death of Hadwin's father-in-law this weekend, however, prompted 35th District Court Judge Ronald Lowe to reschedule the trial for Oct. 29.

Allison was in the care of Childtime Child Care Center for about six months until her death on Sept. 22. Two workers claim they told Hadwin that Allison may have been abused, but she failed to report their suspicions to the state.

The prosecution and defense attorneys argued motions before Lowe today including which witnesses can testify, the kind of testimony that can be introduced to a jury, and what the prosecution can argue if Hadwin doesn't testify.

Defense attorney Todd Flood wants to argue that Allison was known to be injured from fights with children over toys and she was seen biting another child in daycare.

"Mrs. Hadwin is the only one who can look at a jury and say this is what it is that I factored in," said Lowe, speaking about factors that could have influenced her to report the claims of abuse.

"Until then, you can't say if you were in her shoes would you have made the call."

Allison died of blunt force trauma to the head in the home of her foster parents in Canton Township. The foster mother, Carol Poole, is charged with murdering the toddler.

Hadwin could spend up to 93 days in jail and/or pay a \$500 fine if convicted.

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## Muskegon Chronicle

### Father charged with abusing his infant son

Tuesday, July 17, 2007

By Heather L. VanDyke and John S. Hausman

[jhausman@muskegonchronicle.com](mailto:jhausman@muskegonchronicle.com)

First, the Nunica-area man said he accidentally rolled over his 6-month-old son while sleeping.

Later his story changed, police said, and Matthew Lyle Decan claimed his baby's head abruptly flung back when he tripped while "pacing back and forth," trying to calm the crying baby.

But in the end, the 21-year-old father told authorities "he snapped," said Fruitport Township Police Detective Bruce Morningstar, who handled an investigation into injuries the boy suffered July 7. Child Protective Services also investigated the case.

Decan "said the baby woke up and wouldn't stop crying," Morningstar said. "He said he shook him hard and the baby went unresponsive."

Decan, of 14441 136th, was arraigned Thursday on a charge of first-degree child abuse, a felony punishable by up to 15 years in prison. Muskegon County's 60th District Judge Michael J. Nolan set bond at \$50,000 cash or surety, with a requirement Decan have no contact with any minor child. A preliminary examination is scheduled for 11 a.m. July 26.

According to the court file, the early morning incident occurred at 3358 Beechnut in Fruitport Township where Decan was living with the mother of the child. The couple had recently split up but continued to live together, Morningstar said.

The woman currently has custody of the boy and the couple's 19-month-old daughter.

Morningstar said that on July 7, Decan was alone with the child while the woman went out with friends and didn't return until the following morning. She was notified of the baby's injuries when Decan contacted her from the hospital.

Morningstar said Decan drove the baby to Mercy General Health Partners in Muskegon where he was examined, then transferred to Spectrum Health in Grand Rapids. The infant was treated for "head trauma" and has since been released from the hospital, Morningstar said.

It was local hospital officials who alerted law enforcement authorities, Morningstar said.

"Medical staff reported that the baby was colorless and kind of a gray color. He was listless," he said. "The injuries were not consistent with the man's story."

It was unclear how much, if any, long-term damage the baby may have suffered. Physicians told authorities it is hard to gauge the severity of the injury until the child turns 4 or 5, Morningstar said.

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July 17, 2007

**Mount Clemens****Judge: Let Grant kids see family**

Relatives of murdered mom, accused dad told to reach accord

**George Hunter And Edward L. Cardenas / The Detroit News**

**MOUNT CLEMENS** -- A judge had harsh words Monday for two women battling over custody of accused murderer Stephen Grant's children.

Grant's sister, Kelly Utykanski, on Friday filed for a "relative adoption" of the two Grant children, ages 6 and 4. The children have been living in Ohio with their maternal aunt, Alicia Standerfer, since their mother, Tara Grant, was murdered Feb. 9.

Since then, Utykanski and Standerfer have been fighting for custody. Utykanski claims Standerfer hasn't let her see her niece and nephew since before Easter.

The women originally were to appear in Macomb Circuit Court Monday to discuss other matters in the case, but after Utykanski filed for adoption, that took precedence.

Assistant County Prosecutor Jodi Debbrecht, who is representing the Michigan Department of Human Services in the case, said Monday that officials in Ohio have recommended Utykanski not be allowed to see the children.

"DHS in Ohio stopped visitation with the paternal relatives," Debbrecht said. "The two (children) are having behavioral issues at this time"

Macomb Circuit Judge John Foster interrupted Debbrecht before she could finish her sentence: "Well, maybe part of it is, they aren't seeing the family members they like as well as the other family members," he said.

Foster ordered both parties to find a way for the children to see both sides of the family.

"I'm not going make a decision based on some caseworker in Ohio sending you a letter saying that they shouldn't see these children," Foster told Debbrecht. "The children have seen (the Utykanskis) their whole lives, and now they aren't good enough to see them? Why are the Standerfers good enough to see them?"

"Am I going to have to order these children to come back to Michigan?" Foster asked as he ordered both sides to work out an agreement on visitation.

"Whatever you do should be done in the best interests of the children."

Utykanski, Standerfer and their attorneys are barred from commenting to the media about the case because Foster issued a gag order last month. The parties met for about an hour after Monday's hearing and Foster reiterated that they should refrain from talking to the media.

Foster will rule on Utykanski's adoption request on Aug. 6.

Stephen Grant, charged with his wife's murder and dismemberment, was in court but did not speak.

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Detroit Free Press

July 17, 2007

MACOMB COUNTY: MT. CLEMENS

## **Grant's sister allowed to see children, judge says**

Stephen Grant's two children should be allowed to see his sister, a Macomb County Circuit judge ruled Monday.

The children stay with his slain wife's sister in Chillicothe, Ohio. Kelly Utykanski, Grant's sister, said she hasn't seen them since Easter.

Judge John Foster said he'd order the children back to Michigan if the two sides didn't work out better visitation arrangements.



## Judge orders visits for Grant family

He threatens to move Tara's kids back to Michigan if visitation cannot be worked out.

By Jameson Cook  
Macomb Daily Staff Writer

A judge ordered that Stephen Grant's family be allowed to visit his two young children and set a hearing to consider Stephen Grant sister's adoption request, in the increasingly volatile battle over the children.

Judge John Foster of Macomb County Circuit Court discarded a report from an Ohio social worker that cut off visitation and ordered an attorney for the Department of Human Services to arrange for visits between Stephen Grant's immediate family members and his two children.

"I am not going to make a decision based on some case worker in Ohio sending you a letter that they shouldn't see these children," Foster said in a frustrated tone from the bench. "They have seen them their whole lives, so all of a sudden, now these people are not good enough, aren't proper enough to see them. Why are the Standerfers good enough to see them?"

"If I have to order them back (to Michigan), I will. ... My attitude is for DHS to find some way to find some type of visitation."

Foster's comments brought tears from Stephen Grant and his sister, Kelly Utykanski, in the courtroom in downtown Mount Clemens. Stephen Grant's father, William, also attended the hearing.

Grant, 37, is charged with first-degree murder in the Feb. 9 strangling death of 34-year-old Tara in their Washington Township home. He is also accused of dismembering her body in his family Mount Clemens industrial shop.

The children -- a 6-year-old girl and 4-year-old boy -- have been temporarily placed with Tara's sister, Alicia Standerfer, and her husband, Erik, in their southern Ohio home.

Foster's comments came after assistant Macomb prosecutor Jodi Debbrecht informed him that social workers in Ohio halted visitation between Stephen Grant's family and the children.

"The children are having some behavioral issues," said Debbrecht, representing the DHS.

That counters a report at a June 27 court hearing in which Lindsey Greene of the DHS indicated to the judge that "there are no behavioral problems in the home," according to Ohio officials.

Utykanski's attorney, Melinda Deel, told Foster on Monday that Utykanski had not seen the children since "before Easter."

"Both sets of relatives haven't been allowed to see them," Deel said.

Attorneys involved in the case declined to comment, citing a gag order by Foster.

Deel also revealed Monday that Utykanski had filed for a "relative placement" adoption petition in which Stephen Grant has agreed to give up his parental rights to Utykanski, who

would be free to try to adopt the children.

Foster said that Standerfer and the DHS each can submit written legal responses to the petition by July 27 and set an Aug. 6 hearing.

Karen Gullberg Cook, an Oakland County attorney who specializes in Michigan adoption law, said Utykanski's petition is uncommon and an attempt to execute "an end-run around the child protective proceedings."

"If I was a judge, I wouldn't allow it," she said.

Cook said she believes the parental rights termination case against Grant should take precedence over an adoption request.

Utykanski previously filed a "direct placement" adoption but was deemed to be too close of a relative to be eligible.

The consideration of Utykanski's request would include an investigation into her home life, Cook said.

Grant's criminal case is scheduled for a Sept. 19 trial in front of circuit Judge Diane Druzinski. Prosecuting and defense attorneys are scheduled to argue eight defense motions July 31 in front of Druzinski.

According to police, Grant confessed two days after police found Tara's torso in the garage of the home March 2, and Grant fled in a friend's pickup truck to northern Michigan, where he was captured in the early morning hours of March 4.

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## Foster care bill creates a stir

Tuesday, July 17, 2007

**BARRIE BARBER**

Kimberly L. Rowan has cared for 45 foster children in her Reese home during the past five years.

They've included children who are medically fragile, were abandoned or suffered abuse or neglect in their former homes.

Yet the toughest struggle the 47-year-old mother may face isn't in her household. It's in Lansing.

Upset that state legislators are considering a plan to increase the level of private oversight of foster care, she's organizing a Wednesday protest that could draw dozens of foster parents from throughout the state to the steps of the state Capitol.

"We really have a concern about a private agency that's going to make money off abused children," said Rowan, a foster caregiver for the Saginaw County Department of Human Services.

"Our concern is are they going to be able to do the job, and are they going to be able to do it well?"

Private agencies supervise 104 out of Saginaw County's 520 foster care cases, said County Department of Human Services Director Randy R. Barst.

Rowan hosted foster parents and others at meetings in opposition to the plan last month in Thomas Township and Saginaw.

Backers say privatizing would save millions of dollars, but critics say it would cost millions more and put hundreds of state employees out of work.

The leader of a private nonprofit foster care organization says the legislation, which remains in the state Senate, would require private sector accreditation standards that the public agency doesn't have to meet.

"We'd be holding private agencies to a higher standard than they are held to today," said Elizabeth A. Carey, executive director of the Michigan Federation for Children and Families in Lansing.

Higher standards make for better child care, some said.

"These children have one chance to grow up, and we need to do it right," said state Sen. Roger N. Kahn, a Saginaw Township Republican who expects to support the measure.

Nonprofit foster care companies could handle the statewide influx of 2,800 more cases, Carey said, noting the providers have, as needed, expanded or cut ranks for decades.

Profit isn't why nonprofits provide service, Carey said.

"Most of these nonprofits barely make it to fill deficits, but they do it because they are mission-driven," she said.

The state agency has contended the bill would cost up to \$27 million more, while Kahn said the bill would save \$30 million in a system that serves 18,000 foster care children.

While Human Services spokeswoman Karen Stock said the agency opposes parts of the legislation, especially those that could push up workers' caseloads, it hasn't ruled out privatization.

Forty percent of all foster children in the state are under the supervision of private agencies now, she said.

"We believe that the decision about where to place a child should be based on which placement can best meet the needs of that unique child," she said. "Whether those services are provided by a public agency or a private agency are irrelevant."

State Rep. Andy Coulouris, a Saginaw Democrat, opposes the measure.

"It's not good government reform," he said. "We're looking for government reforms that makes sense in this budget year, and that's not one of them. Sometimes government tries to find things that are not broken and fix them anyway."

State Rep. John R. Moolenaar, a Midland Republican, hasn't decided how he'll vote but indicated he likes foster care privatization where it has worked in other states.

Standing beside Rowan, Richland Township resident Laura A. Woods says foster parents should have a choice.

"I don't want to go private," said the 44-year-old who adopted three foster children. "I don't believe children should be used in an experiment." v

Barrie Barber covers politics and government for The Saginaw News. You may reach him at 776-9725.

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# EDITORIAL: Family Ties

Date: Monday, July 16, 2007

Source: *The Baltimore Sun*

A study showing that keeping children at home, even if there are problems, is better than putting them in foster care reinforces the importance of family ties and the need to view foster care as the exception, not the norm, when dealing with troubled families. That's a lesson that Maryland is now trying to apply - and wisely so - after too many years of bad practices.

The recently released study, by a professor at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology's Sloan School of Management, examined 15,000 cases in Illinois from 1990 to 2002, one of the largest studies of the effects of foster care. The research showed that in cases on the margin, where children could have been kept with their families or placed in foster care, the long-term results were better for those who remained with their families. As they grew older, they had fewer teen births, were less likely to become juvenile delinquents and were more likely to hold jobs as young adults.

Clearly, it is not safe to leave a child with abusive or neglectful parents. And children who are victims of abuse or neglect are traumatized whether they stay in their homes or are removed. But child advocates rightly note the importance of maintaining a child's connections to familiar people and places. And the study ably bolsters the principle that those connections should be severed only when absolutely necessary.

That principle hasn't been followed well in Maryland, where the foster care population has increased from about 4,300 in 1987 to more than 10,000 today. Failure to recruit and retain enough foster care families has meant that too many children wind up in group homes, making it difficult, if not impossible, to maintain meaningful ties to family and neighborhood.

The system is long overdue for reform, and state Human Resources Secretary Brenda Donald promises major changes. She is emphasizing the importance of place to the well-being of children. That's why she wants to

redirect system resources and work with other departments to provide more services, such as mental health counseling and drug treatment, to help families stay together in their homes and provide safe care for children. She would also increase the number of foster and kinship families in order to keep children who must be separated from their parents in other family homes instead of group homes.

That is certainly the right vision - but more experienced supervisors and better technology will be needed to implement it. Ms. Donald should push for those essential changes sooner rather than later so that she and her department can move as quickly as possible to strengthen rather than weaken the family ties that bind.



## Battle begins to save health care for low-income kids

Tuesday, July 17, 2007

By Sharon Emery

Lansing Bureau

LANSING -- With more Michigan workers earning less, now's not the time to cut back on helping low- and moderate-income families, say supporters of expanding the federal-state MICHild health insurance program.

They want Congress to not only renew the program, which has a \$25-billion, five-year budget, but to boost funding. Known nationally as the State Children's Health Insurance Program (SCHIP), it provides health insurance to 30,400 children and 64,000 childless adults in Michigan families making too much to qualify for Medicaid but too little to afford insurance on their own.

Families of three can qualify if they earn up to \$34,340 a year, or 200 percent of poverty; childless adults are eligible if they earn up to \$3,600 annually, or 35 percent of poverty.

"Too many Michigan children are without any health coverage and the number continues to grow as more employers either stop offering insurance or increase premiums so high that they're out of reach for many working families," said Sharon Claytor Peters, president and CEO of Michigan's Children, an advocacy group.

The bipartisan plan being considered by the U.S. Senate Finance Committee starting today would pump \$35 billion more into the program over five years. It's likely to go through several changes over the summer, as Congress works to complete the bill before authorization expires Sept. 30.

Members of The Promise of Michigan's Children, a coalition backing increased funding, held a Lansing news conference last week to urge speedy action on increasing funding by \$50 billion. They say at least \$14 billion more is needed just to maintain current coverage.

The additional money would cover 110,000 more uninsured children in Michigan. Nationwide, the increase would cover an additional 6 million children and continue coverage of 5.5 million kids.

President Bush is threatening to fight the Senate plan, saying it's an attempt to provide universal health care. He has said backers are trying to "federalize medicine."

Families qualifying for MICHild pay a \$10 monthly premium and their children receive regular checkups, immunizations, emergency care, dental and vision care, as well as medications. There are no copays or deductibles. Families must earn between 150 percent and 200 percent of poverty.

"There's a negative stigma associated with welfare, but this is not welfare," said Shoma Pal, of Blue Cross Blue Shield of Michigan, which insures most of the recipients in Michigan. "This is private insurance, you get a Blue Cross card."

As a result, access is generally not a problem because providers are reimbursed at commercial rates.

Pam Carter of Royal Oak, a mother of five who makes \$26,000 a year as a full-time preschool teacher, praised the program and said her youngest daughter, who suffers from a rare seizure disorder, was able to receive high-quality, specialized care.

"We will forever and forever and forever be grateful for that," an emotional Carter said at the press conference. She said she was unable to afford the \$384 monthly it would have cost to insure her children under her employ-sponsored insurance.

Several Michigan members of Congress are in prime positions to move the bill, so Promise for Michigan's Children highlighted their roles. Democrat Sen. Debbie Stabenow sits on the Senate Finance Committee, and U.S. Rep. John Dingell, D-Dearborn, is chair of the House Energy and Commerce Committee.

The Senate plan would bring an extra \$60 million into the state, Stabenow said, preventing a shortfall in the program starting next year.

"I think it's a very positive bill," Stabenow said. "It would add dollars for Michigan and allow the state to insure more children."

Dingell said the program has given millions of children access to health care, but expansion is necessary.

"Despite a decade of success, nearly 9 million children are currently without health insurance, many of whom would be helped by SCHIP," Dingell said.

More information and an online application for MICHild are available at [www.michigan.gov/michild](http://www.michigan.gov/michild).

%%bodyend%%-- Correspondent Sarah Kellogg in Washington contributed to this report.

-- Correspondent Sarah Kellogg in Washington contributed to this report.

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## KALAMAZOO GAZETTE

### Increase number of federal housing vouchers

Monday, July 16, 2007

A little more than a year ago, for the first time in five years, and for only one day, new applications were taken from low-income Kalamazoo County families seeking housing help.

Long lines of people formed wherever applications were accepted, and they snaked around corners and down streets.

At the end of the day, May 17, 2006, fully 2,000 applications had been accepted for federal Section 8 housing vouchers. It will be years before housing officials get through the list.

But it's possible that the waiting time will get a little bit shorter, thanks to a bill passed by the U.S. House last week -- and with the support of U.S. Rep. Fred Upton, R-St. Joseph -- to expand the number of Section 8 housing vouchers available through the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development.

The Section 8 housing program has been a successful way to help low-income families find decent housing. Unlike the failed old federal housing project scheme, in which the poor were segregated into desperate islands of crime and blight, the Section 8 voucher program allows qualifying families to live in mixed-income neighborhoods.

Under the program, qualifying families must pay one-third of their incomes for rent, with the voucher program paying the balance.

Kalamazoo County has about 800 Section 8 vouchers that have been claimed. Vouchers become available when a family with a voucher begins earning too much money to continue to be eligible, or when a voucher tenant misses rent payments and is evicted or leaves the program for some other reason.

About 2 million low-income families are assisted at a cost of about \$16 billion a year, nearly half of all families receiving housing assistance.

The bill, which overwhelmingly passed the House last week, 333-83, would add 20,000 vouchers a year for the next five years. That's a drop in the bucket. But it is also an improvement over previous years when the number of vouchers available had been reduced.

It also would change the formula by which tenant incomes and rents are calculated, and add incentives for recipients to work, increase their income and seek higher education.

Anyone who watched the floodgates open and the river of low-income families flow toward the Section 8 application sites last year can see the crying need in this community -- as well as in others across the nation -- for decent, affordable, low-cost housing in safe neighborhoods.

Until now, the trend in the federal government has been to restrict the availability of the vouchers.

The result has been more families living in substandard housing, or having to resort to shelters. The result has been more concentrated pockets of poverty and fewer low-income kids growing up in middle-class neighborhoods.

In Michigan, especially, where a stubbornly bad economy has taken its toll on the state's poorest families, federal housing assistance is sorely needed.

We urge the U.S. Senate to follow the House's lead and expand availability of Section 8 vouchers.

And although the Bush administration has discouraged expanding the program, we hope there will be no veto at the end of the day.

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## Dad says he stole to buy diapers

Tuesday, July 17, 2007

By Theresa D. McClellan

The Grand Rapids Press

BYRON TOWNSHIP -- When his family's welfare payment was cut, an unemployed new father allegedly turned to his neighbors for help -- without asking.

Dustin Anderson, 20, allegedly told detectives he routinely stole cash and small electronics from more than 100 unlocked cars parked within about five miles of his Byron Township home.

The thefts have occurred over the past couple of months. The suspect's child was born in April.

"He has a newborn at home and has financial troubles. When his (state aid payment) was cut, he said he was doing what he needed to do to survive," said Kent County Sheriff's Detective Bryan Muir.

But detectives are investigating Anderson's reasons for the alleged thefts, since there were some discrepancies in his story, Muir said.

"From his estimates, he'd get about \$50 or \$60 in cash and he'd keep for his personal use or pawn other items," the detective said of the alleged thefts.

Anderson was arraigned Monday in 63rd District Court via a video link with the Kent County Jail. He faces two felony charges of larceny from a motor vehicle. He remained in jailed in lieu of a \$5,000 bond.

The detectives are investigating whether Anderson stole from as many as 100 cars in the Byron Township area. Because many of the items stolen were small or of minimal value, they were not reported, Muir said.

Anderson was arrested about 2 a.m. Saturday after a Kent County sheriff's deputy investigating an unrelated home invasion stopped him for questioning in the 7700 block of Burlingame Avenue SW. He appeared nervous, riding his bicycle and wearing a backpack, and matched the description of a man who allegedly tried to break into a vehicle last month, Muir said.

After deputies confronted him, Anderson cooperated, police said.

In his backpack, they found sunglasses and small electronics, including iPods and GPS equipment, said Kent County Sheriff's Lt. Kevin Kelley.

Deputies found more items at Anderson's home.

Anderson told detectives he would go out "about once a week, based on need. If they needed formula or diapers, he'd go out," Muir said.

Police said the suspect went out in the morning hours, hitting unlocked cars.

Kelley said it is unlikely Anderson would be convicted of 100 incidents of theft, even with a confession.

"When they do that many, they can't even remember where or when. And without them recalling the exact vehicle and us recontacting the victim, it's hard to get a criminal charge," Kelley said.